## The Jewish Gaily

## FORWARD

SAN FRANCISCO

CONGREGATION SHA'AR ZAHAV 290 Dolores Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-2262

בור זהב Cheshvan/Kislev 5765

November 2004

## Kadimah-led Services

#### Saturday, December 4 10 am

You won't want to miss this terrific opportunity to daven with the youth of our community. From the youngest members of our religious school to those b'nei mitzvah veterans, our students will be sharing their torah with us at this special twice a year event. You will be energized and inspired. Please come and support our kids.

## Special Programs

#### Angels in America Saturdays, November 20 and 27 5-9 pm

Tony Kushner's landmark play Angels in America deals with AIDS and Jewish/gay identity. Come for video viewings of this extraordinary play, with discussion to follow.

## Thanksgiving Interfaith Service Tuesday, November 23

Join with our neighborhood faith communities for a service in which we give thanks for the many gifts in our lives. This is one of several interfaith services CSZ has hosted since 9/11/2001.

## Please Be in Touch With Me

I am eager to be in touch with all members of the CSZ family whenever there are occasions of joy or sadness in your lives. Where there is a death in the family, please call me as soon as possible. We very much want to be there with you at a time of grief.

Rabbi Camille Shira Angel

## To Tend and Befriend Each Other

Our synagogue is both a place to open up our eyes to the world and to look deeply inside ourselves. We are each out there carrying the burdens of the world and the burdens of our personal lives. We need the synagogue community to help sustain us, to give us support and to help us recognize a Power greater than ourselves.

While there is no protection from suffering, there is a place where we can open to one another, in times of joy as well as sorrow; a place to fortify our spirits and gain strength for the challenges ahead. As Rabbi Angel said in her Rosh Hashanah sermon, "Good congregations enable their members to respond to the stresses of this frightening and chaotic world by

'tending and befriending' one another."

Synagogues are a place to go for comfort, however, sometimes a congregant requires specific clinical support. In the past, a congregant might approach the rabbi and say that he's experiencing significant stress and distress. In addition to providing pastoral care, the rabbi's only option was to pick up the phone and make a referral. Having an onsite Jewish Family and Children's Services counselor will enable this person to be seen almost immediately.

Randy Weled, M.F.T., is our new onsite counselor. Randy has already begun his work with our community. He will be

continued on page 7

## Introducing CSZ's New Counselor, Randy Weled, M.F.T.

I am coming to Sha'ar Zahav as your onsite counselor with gratitude and excitement. In many ways it is a fulfillment of a life-long dream. When Rabbi Angel introduced me on Yom Kippur she said, "I always thought that if I hadn't become a rabbi, I would have been a therapist." I replied, "If I hadn't become a therapist, I would have become a rabbi."

I have been working as a counselor since I moved to San Francisco in 1989. I moved here from Hawaii, via New York, to take over the work of my mentor who died of AIDS. I went back to school in my 40s to become a licensed Marriage Family Therapist. In addition to being employed part-time by Jewish Family and Children's Services as CSZ's counselor, I also have a private practice.

As well as providing immediate counseling and assessment for those in need, I will be leading a variety of groups on topics that may include: men's spirituality, recovering from addiction in community, coping with the holiday season, being sin-

gle, being in a relationship, Jewish answers to therapeutic issues and more. I am also interested in your ideas and groups will be formed around people's interests.



At the afternoon

breakout session on Yom Kippur, approximately 100 people attended the discussion of forgiveness that Rabbi Angel and I co-facilitated. We have decided to continue this discussion on Wednesday, November 10 from 7 - 8:30 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend.

If you have ideas about groups you would like to participate in or if you just want to become acquainted, you may reach me at the synogogue (x311) or via email (Randy@ShaarZahav.org). I look forward to meeting you.



From the Rabbi's Study

## Thankful for Thanksgiving

O God of blue, red, brown, black, and multicolored bird, of the singing, humming, and silent bird, of the noisy woodpecker and the cooing dove, of the perfect yellow sunflowers, fanciful laughing pansies, thank You for Your beautiful gifts of rich differences and variety.

O God, whose countless shades of green we cannot discern, Who made no two leaves, grasses, animals, or humans alike, Who made blue sky, white and gray clouds, soft reddish-brown and black earthen soils, infinite desert sands and impenetrable oceans deep, we thank You for the manifold and diverse universe You have made and shared with us.

Amen.

--Marian Wright Edelman, Founder of the Children's Defense Fund and Stand up for Children

In our weekday and Shabbat prayerbook, we have a thanksgiving prayer known by its first few words as Modim Anachnu Lach, which means, "We gratefully acknowledge Your wondrous gifts." Hidden within this prayer is the phrase, "We thank You for inspiring us to thank You." This idea takes us well beyond being thankful for our objective gifts. It is the recognition that even the ability to know that we should be grateful is a gift from God and worthy of thanks.



The concept of giving thanks seems to be universal, something expressed in one way or another – in every religion and every culture. Most societies value the expression of appreciation and recognize its ability to smooth the rough edges of interpersonal relations. For this reason, we make a point of teaching children to express thanks from a very early age. We strive to instill gratitude as a habit, even if at times we know the feeling behind the gesture may be lacking.

We sense intuitively that a society that devalues or denigrates the concept of gratitude – that defines relationships by functionality alone – cannot and perhaps ought not to, thrive.

The same is true of our relationship with God; giving thanks in a religious context is an extension of the basic impulse to be grateful in an interpersonal context. In Judaism, we offer thanks to the All Compassionate One for each gift, even as we petition for what we lack.

We do not modulate our gratitude based on some evaluation of profit or loss, nor does giving thanks necessarily mean that we are satisfied. The very first blessing we say in the morning, our very first act of the day, expresses thanks that we are alive, even if we are ill. We make a blessing over the gift of sight, even if our vision is dim. And we give thanks for having clothes to put on, even if they are

threadbare. These obligatory blessings guard us against taking our most basic gifts for granted.

It feels easier and more natural to give thanks when everything seems to be going well, when we have peace and security, health and bounty. But when we are in a situation of war and fear, of sickness and poverty, when our inclination is to cry and curse, it is much more difficult – but it is still possible and necessary.

When he was poor and starving, the famous Rabbi Zuysa is said to have thanked God for giving him such a good appetite! It is no coincidence that Rabbi Zuysa's profound capacity for gratitude was matched by a deep relationship with God.

Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz teaches us that the structure of giving thanks on a regular basis, even in hard times, encourages us to focus on the positive side of life. It does not mean that we forget the dark side, just that we keep a true perspective, giving the positive side its due. He writes, "Sorrow and anxiety should not extinguish our ability to say 'thank you' for our blessings, even when they are obscured by pain. Harder times can shake us from complacency and may enhance in us the ability to perceive the good as a gift to be appreciated and acknowledged -- in good times and bad."

In the end, feeling and expressing gratitude is good for us. The Divine One does not "need" our thanksgiving. It is we who benefit from feeling and expressing it.

I hope you will join me and our neighborhood brothers and sisters, together we celebrate an interfaith community Thanksgiving Service, Tuesday, November 23 at 7 pm in our beautiful Mishkan Dolores sanctuary. If you would like to participate in the service, please contact me at the synagogue. This service is a continuation of the friendships we've been establishing with the churches in our neighborhood since 9/11 and will hopefully be the first of many Thanksgiving i interfaith services in years to come.

## The Jewish Gaily Forward

November 2004 Volume 28, Issue 3

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## Do we need to be a "gay shul?"

By Arthur Slepian.

Synagogues can last for a long time. When I have attended the national biennial meet-

ings of the Union for Reform Judaism, I have met leaders from synagogues that are more than 100 or 150 years old. Such long and proud histories make our 27 years here at CSZ seem a bit short, a reminder that in the grand scheme of Jewish history, our congregation is still pretty new, and it makes me wonder what CSZ will be like fifty years from now.

These reflections lead me to some controversial questions: Does it makes sense for us to continue to present ourselves to the outside world as a "gay shul"? And if we are not a "gay shul," then what are we?

To start with, I wonder if there will be any "gay shuls" 25 or 50 years from now? I tend to believe that in the future, the gay shuls like ours that developed in the 1970s, 80s and 90s will be viewed as having played an absolutely critical and essential role in the transformation of Judaism. Our sister congregations across the country, led in many ways by our pioneering work here at CSZ, have helped to right an injustice, deepen scholarship, advance the liturgy and promote equality and inclusion, not just for LGBT Jews, but for women, the disabled, members of interfaith couples, and all who have been marginalized in some ways by the religious establishment.

But I also believe, somewhat paradoxically, that our success will ultimately make our existence as a "gay shul" less compelling. and that as we succeed in the transformation of Judaism, we will ultimately need to transform ourselves. I believe that the time for our own transformation may be approaching faster than we think.

The evidence for this is already beginning to appear. Many of our former members or potential members have found their spiritual home at other Bay Area congregations. Unlike 27 years ago, LGBT Jews are now welcome in shuls all over the region, so peo-

ple can and do choose a synagogue based on many factors: location, clergy, education programs, music, ruach, finances. Some of our sister congregations in other cities have already begun to reconsider their mission statements.

A second question is how we relate to our members (and those who might consider joining us) who are part of mixed-gender relationships or are single but self-define as "straight." A significant portion of our community is not LGBT, including several members of the Va'ad, the chairs of some key committees, the parents of many of our Kadimah students and some of the most dedicated members we have. Yet I think that even some of the most active of these members would tell us that they sometimes wonder if they are fully equal here in their membership status. I wonder if the heterosexual Jews in our own neighborhood, who walk or drive by CSZ every day, believe that our doors are fully open to them.

We have never had a president at CSZ that was not either a gay man or a lesbian. Yet as I look out at those that might be most qualified to serve in that role following me and Ora, several of the people I would put right at the top of the list are in mixed gender relationships. Are we ready for a president who is not LGBT? Personally, I hope so.

We also need to consider the children of our community, many of whom are now teenagers. As they grow into adulthood, will they be more welcome here if they are gay rather than straight? Several of our teens have already stepped up into leadership roles in the community. Perhaps one of them will be president of CSZ someday. I think that would be a great blessing, regardless of their sexual orientation.

There is much more I could say on this topic, but I'll conclude by saying that I know that this is an issue on which there is not consensus in our community. I know that many members, perhaps a majority, including others in leadership, will not agree with the views expressed above. My goal in writing this column was to raise an important issue for our future, rather than to provide the answers. I hope it sparks continued discussion, at our upcoming Congregational Advance, and in other forums, formal and informal. I look forward to being a part of that dialogue.

Arthur Slepian,

President, cszpres@pacbell.net





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## Phose yeard mileasy seals

Children and Family Corner

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## Baby Chavurah

Sunday, November 14, 10 - noon

Bring those under-twos out to play, sing and commune with like-minded babes and their parents. Join us for potluck brunch, playtime and socializing. This month we meet at the synagogue. Please bring your baby and a vegetarian dish. Older siblings are welcome as are nonmembers. Baby Chavurah meets the second Sunday of each month.

#### Tot Shabbat

Saturday, November 6, 10:30 - 11:30 am

Come celebrate Shabbat with your tot. Bring your 2- to 5-year-olds for singing, prayer, storytelling, crafts and Jewish family fun with Sandra Menachem, Early Childhood Education Specialist. Younger siblings and nonmembers are welcome.

## Family Kabbalat Shabbat

Friday, November 19, 6:30 pm

Meet, eat, sing and celebrate Shabbat with CSZ families and then stay for Friday night services. Families with children of all ages are encouraged to come. Dinner is vegetarian potluck; please bring a dish to share. No RSVP required. Be a part of the ruach (spirit) of our community and invite friends and family to join you. Shabbat Shalom!

## Giving Thanks for the High Holidays

Many people began the year with a mitzvah, helping to make family and children's

High Holiday programming a success. Thank you to Alan Gordon for coordinating Family Services, to our service leaders Rainero-deHaan. Ilana Tsipora Prochovnick, Aaron Goldman-Maclachlan, Red Bennett and Rabbi Angel and to all of the Kadimah students who took part in the services. Thank you to Annie Downs for leading our Junior Junior Choir on Erev Rosh Hashanah and to all of our talented little people for singing so sweetly. Thank you to Joan Goldman for coordinating children's program door-sitters and to all of the people who spent an hour keeping our children safe. Thank you to all of our childcare staff who gave up their holidays to be with our kids: Micah Morris, Chris Cavitt, Nora Downs, Alapai Kim-Michels, Esther Fishman, Mercedes Navarro, Annie Downs and Aaron Goldman-Maclachlan. Thanks to Deb Yates and Shelley Adler for leading our tot circle. Finally thank you to all of our Sukkah hosts: the Mintzers, the Prochovnick/Frantz family, and the Bernard/Herman family. May the new year continue to bring us opportunities to do joyful mitzvot.

NO Kadimah November 24th or November 27th - Thanksgiving Holiday Welcome to new Kadimah Staff Member, East Bay Hebrew Tutor Joel Siegel.

Contact Sue Bojdak, Director of Family and Children's Education, (415/861-6932 x302 or educator@shaarzahav.org) for more information about any of these programs or to RSVP.

## Adam Bellm Kahn Bar Mitzvah

Adam David Bellm Kahn will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Shabbat Chanukah, Saturday, December 11. He will chanting be from Parshat Miketz, in



which Joseph interprets Pharaoh's dream.

Adam is a seventh-grade student at Live Oak School in San Francisco, where his favorite subjects are art, music, drama and P.E. He loves singing, acting in shows, roller blading and playing video games, and says he would like to act in movies someday.

Adam has been a student at Kadimah since age five, and has also gone to UAHC Camp Newman in Santa Rosa for the past five summers. He traveled with his family to Israel in the summer of 2003, where he visited his aunt and cousin, and his favorite spots were the Jerusalem Zoo and swimming in the natural pools at Sakhneh. Adam's first bar mitzvah mentor was Joe Hample, who left this past summer for rabbinical school in Jerusalem, and his mentor is now Laura Lowe. "They are both very nice people who like to laugh," says Adam. "When we're not studying Hebrew, we also go to the movies together and go shopping on Haight Street." Adam would also like to thank his parents and his teacher Phyllis Mintzer. Please join Adam and his parents, Dan Bellm and Rabbi Yoel Kahn, on December 11!



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## Adult Education in November

#### Torah From a Queer Perspective

Four remaining sessions: November 2, 9, 16 and 30

The Queer Torah Study Project is a weekly group that has been studying traditional Jewish texts from a queer perspective for the last several months. This fall, join special guest Rabbi Angel as we discuss how our most sacred text speaks to our life experience. Drop-in sessions \$5 each.

#### Ma'ariv and Shacharit Services: A Guided Tour Wednesdays, November 3 and 10, 7-9 pm

Ron Edelman will take us, step by step, through our evening (Ma'ariv) and morning (Shacharit) services. We'll learn about the liturgy and its history, the different practices in Jewish worship and our own particular minhagim (customs) at CSZ. Whether you are a long-time service attendee or a newcomer, join us as we explore the beautiful CSZ services!

Member \$18, Public \$36.

To register or for more information contact programs@shaarzahav.org or call 415-861-6932.

#### Chanukah Haikus

## Two remaining sessions: November 4 and 11, 7-9 pm

Get an early start on Chanukah presents this year. We will create images of Chanukah using micrography and Hebrew calligraphy, then write haikus or poems about them. Come express yourself in this unique art form and make great Chanukah gifts for your family and friends.

Members \$28, Public \$36 (both include materials fee).

Taught by Alan Foss and Andrew Ramer. To register or for more information contact programs@shaarzahav.org or call 415-861-6932.

#### Havdalah Discussion and Potluck Saturday November 13, 7:00 pm

Join us for a series of informal, once a

month Saturday discussion get-togethers. We'll meet to talk about various topics and end with a beautiful Havdalah service and a veggie potluck. Our November discussion will be on God language (He? She? It?) Come, talk, eat and, in community, mark the end of Shabbat. A great opportunity for both Jewish learning and schmoozing.

Free.

#### **Downtown Talmud for Busy People Friday, November 19, noon-1 pm**

If you have always wanted to explore the Talmud but thought you didn't have time in your hectic schedule, then these sessions might be just the thing, as Rabbi Camille Shira Angel brings the learning to your downtown work environment! Bring a friend or colleague — and your lunch — and join Rabbi Angel as we look to Jewish texts to explore ethical questions relating to current affairs. Flood Building, 870 Market Street at Powell, Room 838. Free.



Eric Johannson and Marc Lipschutz are having a good time with the CSZ Brotherhood. Over 20 people attended a recent Brotherhood's party the day of the Folsom Street Fair – a great day was had by all!

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## Job Search Workshops from the Jewish Vocational Service

CSZ and other San Francisco synagogues have teamed with the Jewish Vocational Service's Jewish Employment Network to present a number of useful workshops on job searching and career development.

Conducting an Effective Job Search Wednesdays, November 3 and 10, 7-9 pm Jewish Community Center of San Francisco, 3200 California Street

Are you interested in understanding the dynamics of the job search and how to stay motivated and on-track until you get reemployed? Want to gain insight into the best ways to approach potential employers? In this two part workshop we will focus on: Your approach and attitude; targeting the job market; connecting through informational interviewing and networking; resumes and cover letters, the interview process.

**Energizing Your Job Search Tuesday November 9, 7 - 9pm** 

Congregation Emanu-El, 2 Lake Street, San Francisco

Whether you are in the middle of a seemingly stalled job search or at the beginning of one, chances are that you can use a little more energy and a lot more organization. Join this fun and casual workshop about getting your job search in motion. We will discuss: The importance of having a clear, concise vision in a job search and how to achieve that vision; how to redevelop an effec-

tive, focused networking plan and how to best avoid burning out your contacts; the reality of graduate programs, extension courses, and informational interviews. Attendees will leave this workshop with tools to help re-ignite their job search.

Networking for a Successful Career Wednesday, November 17, 10:30 - noon Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 290 Dolores Street, San Francisco

Discuss the importance of networking in developing a successful career, succeeding in one's current job, and getting ready to look for and/or secure the next one. We will look at various venues for networking, techniques for getting a conversation started, barriers and fears around networking, and tips for turning an initial contact into a longer-term relationship and for keeping in touch.

All programs are free. RSVP requested but not required. For further information visit www.jvs.org/JEN.htm or contact Rebecca Bassin at rbassin@jvs.org or 415-782-6223.

### Want to be the First to Know The News?

Then join the Newsletter Committee.

We are always looking for people with writing or editing skills who want to know everything that's going on in the synagogue.

For more information, contact Prudence Carter (pruc@sbcglobal.net)

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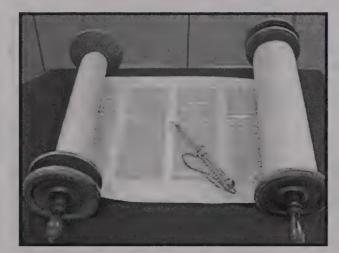
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#### Befriend Each Other

continued from page 1

offering short-term counseling services for congregants in need, as well as making referrals, identifying resources and helping us create workshops and support groups on a variety of issues. In addition, Rabbi Natan Fenner from the Bay Area Jewish Healing Center will be leading a bereavement group for us this winter. Please be in touch with our office to let us know your interest.

Support groups help us to cultivate understanding and compassion not just for the other but also for ourselves.

We are fortunate to be able to offer this innovative initiative through the financial support of JFCS and the assistance of many in our community. I hope you will take some time to participate in this most meaningful endeavor.



### Female to Male International

FTMI is the largest, longest-running educational organization serving FTM Transgender and Transsexual men. We are an entirely volunteer run organization which publishes a quarterly newsletter, organizes events, and facilitates monthly peer led support groups. Call or email for details, gender confirmation is possible!

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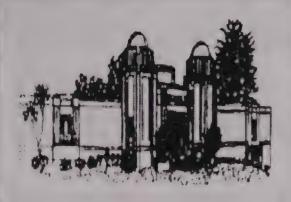
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### Anniversaries

- 6 James Edlin and Eve Meyer
- 7 Judith Holiber and Kimberly Warsaw
- 8 Michael Bettinger and Robert Goldstein
- 11 Terry Fletcher and Glen Hauer
- 13 Virginia Donohue and Mark Klaiman
- 14 Anne Bluethenthal and Donna Rae Palmer
- 17 Elizabeth Schaffer and Michael Schaffer
- 17 Lisa Katz and Sharon Heath
- 24 Ann Daniels and Jonathan Zingman
- 29 Rachel Maclachlan and Nancy Silverrod

### **Yahrzeits**

- 1 Richard D. Wright
- 3 Forrest Kincade
- 7 Donald Albert
- 11 Sidney Rosenthal
- 11 Bruce Apter
- 16 Chuck Norton
- 22 Tristano Palermino

## Condolences

- **Susan Tubbesing**, on the death of her aunt. Doris Bezman.
- Michael Bettinger, on the death of his aunt, Anna Rothenberg.
- Nathan Robinson, on the death of his uncle, Richard Robinson.
- Josh and Anna Katz, on the death of their mother and mother-in-law, Alice Katz.
- **Kelley Clements**, on the death of her friend, Jean Cramer.
- Matt Levine, on the loss of his friend, Maria Cecilia Pasamba.
- Jonathan Zingman and Ann Daniels, on the loss of their niece, and Shira and Naomi Zingman Daniels on the loss of their cousin, Brittany Phillips.
- Alan Michels and Laureen Kim, on the loss of their friend, Holly Nishimura.

## Naches

Trudi Hauptman on her position as Administration and Human Resources Assistant at Swords to Plowshares.

## Birthdays

- 1 Joss Eldredge
- 1 Steven Polsky
- 3 Donna Blow
- 5 Mara Shuster-Lefkowitz
- 5 Steve Marshall
- 5 Eric Weiss
- 5 Hazel Olson-Dorf
- 6 Jerrold Polansky
- 7 Joel Ginsberg
- 7 Samuel Rodriguez
- 7 Rachel Kliegman
- 8 Tova Green
- 8 William Garcia
- 9 Shmulik Fishman
- 9 Brad Post
- 10 Evan Markiewicz
- 10 Elijah Lezell Jatovsky
- 11 Joshua Katz
- 11 Zachary Weber Fineberg
- 11 Patricia Lin
- 12 Seth Skolnick
- 12 Richard Weiner
- 12 Gina Surber
- 13 Cohen Stein
- 14 Ken Repp
- 15 Manny Fishman
- 16 Jason Baskin
- 16 Ruth Rainero
- 17 Sari McConnell
- 18 Adam Orman
- 20 Ali Cannon
- 20 Alan Gordon
- 22 Anna Stuart-Friedman
- 23 Benjamin Gustavson-Scharf
- 24 Alexis Lezin
- 24 Justyn Haveson-Lezin
- 24 Ellie Cohen
- 25 Michael Sporn
- 25 Julia Becker
- 26 Nancy Kates
- 28 Judy Schwartz
- 28 Beatrice Lieberman
- 29 Harold Podgur
- 29 David Rosenzweig

## Oneg, Flower and Childcare Sponsorships

#### September 3/4

Bimah flowers were sponsored anonymously in honor of Gabby Volodarsky's birthday.

Oneg was sponsored by **Steven Angelides** in honor of Gabby Volodarsky's birthday.

#### 10/11

Bimah flowers generously sponsored by **Tamhas Griffith** in honor of Aimee Durfee's welcoming into the covenant.

Friday oneg was generously sponsored by

Tamhas Griffith in honor of

Aimee Durfee's welcoming into
the covenant.

Saturday oneg was generously sponsored by **Ellen Berger** in memory of her brother, Harvey Berger.

Friday night childcare was generously sponsored by Jonathan, Vera and Michele Williamson in honor of Andy Williamson's welcoming into the covenant.

#### **High Holiday Sponsorships**

Bimah greenery was sponsored by **Alex Ingersoll**.

Cleaning services sponsored by Laura Lowe.

Rosh Hashanah bimah flowers were sponsored by Laura Lowe in loving memory of her uncle, Norton Pintchuk.

Rosh Hashanah oneg was sponsored by Walter Leiss.

Yom Kippur bimah flowers were sponsored in memory of Rose Kliman Byer.

Yom Kippur "break the fast" was sponsored by Walter Leiss.





